

**MILWAUKEE FIRE & POLICE COMMISSION
FIREFIGHTER
CANDIDATE PREPARATION GUIDE**

MARCH, 2003

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INTRODUCTION

The information contained in this Guide is intended to assist persons who have applied for the position of Firefighter. You may have questions about the job duties and benefits, the selection process and the steps you can take to prepare for the selection process. This Preparation Guide will answer many of your questions and also provide you with useful test-taking strategies, sample test questions and information that will assist you in preparing for the examination. All of the information presented in this guide is accurate as of this date, but is subject to change.

THE NATURE OF FIREFIGHTER WORK

IS THE FIRE SERVICE THE CAREER FOR YOU?

A career in the Fire Service can be both challenging and satisfying, but it is not the right choice for everyone. You should think carefully about the information which follows and take every opportunity to learn more about the Fire Service. You might wish to stop at a local fire station or talk to any firefighters with whom you are acquainted to find out what life as a firefighter is really like.

THE LIFE OF A FIREFIGHTER

Firefighting is an extremely hazardous occupation. A firefighter will sometimes have no choice but to put life and personal safety on the line for the safety and well-being of the community and its citizens. In addition to fighting fires, performing rescues and rendering emergency medical assistance, firefighters must be willing and able to face such situations as chemical spills, building collapses, explosions, floods, tornados and electrical hazards.

The Fire Department is a paramilitary organization, in that it follows a strict chain of command, with deference and respect due to superior officers.

One of the most important characteristics that a firefighter should have is the ability to work as a team member. Teamwork reduces the potential for injuries and loss of life, as well as increasing effectiveness in handling emergency situations.

Cooperation is a key word for firefighters. Since firefighters work 24-hour continuous shifts, eating together and sharing dormitory space, it is important that they get along easily with their peers. Station house duties such as cooking, washing dishes, cleaning up and scrubbing floors must be shared. A sense of humor is also helpful, as few escape taking their turn at being the object of teasing.

DUTIES OF A FIREFIGHTER

The tasks which a firefighter must perform are varied, and many of them are strenuous. A firefighter must be able to perform all the tasks which are essential to the job.

At a fire, firefighters, under the direction of a company officer, may be called upon to lay hose, sometimes for considerable distances, to reach the fire. They may carry hose packs or 5-gallon hand pumps up many flights of stairs. They control and advance hose which is discharging water onto the fire. As they move through burning buildings, they wear face masks, heavy protective pants, coats, boots and helmets, and carry air tanks on their backs. They must proceed on hands and knees in order to stay where heat and smoke are the least intense. They search, by sound and touch, often in zero visibility conditions, for victims of fire. They remove victims to safety using whatever routes and methods are available.

Firefighters at a fire scene may be called upon to carry and raise ladders long enough to reach windows or roofs on the 2nd or 3rd story, and sometimes higher. They climb these ladders, often carrying power saws or roof ladders in addition to their axes and pike poles. In order to allow heat and smoke to escape from burning buildings, they chop or saw roof holes, often while braced on pitched roofs. Firefighters climb aerial ladders to heights over 100 feet and perform various operations at these heights. When necessary, firefighters use a variety of extrication equipment to free trapped accident victims.

A firefighter's duties are not limited to fighting fires. In fact, the majority of calls to which firefighters respond are medical emergencies. Firefighters are sent when citizens call 911 because of an accident, injury or medical problem. They are often the first to arrive on the scene. Firefighters are trained and certified as Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT-Basic). They perform basic life support services, such as taking pulse and blood pressure, stopping bleeding, immobilizing patients, clearing breathing passages, performing CPR and operating automatic defibrillation equipment. Firefighters are additionally trained and certified at the EMT-Basic IV level. Firefighters must participate in training and testing to maintain these certifications.

A firefighter's duties, however, are not all adventure. They also are responsible for clean up at the scene of an incident. At a fire scene, for example, they use shovels, mops, buckets and brooms to remove water and fire debris. They do sufficient repairs to prevent damaged structural components from becoming a safety hazard. They search anywhere that a smoldering remnant of the fire may be concealed, penetrating walls and ceilings with their pike poles to eliminate any possibility of re-ignition.

Firefighters also maintain the fire engines and ladder trucks so that they function reliably and are always ready to go within seconds after an alarm is received. Work performed includes washing and cleaning the vehicles as well as cleaning, checking and testing the equipment that they carry.

Academy Training. If you are hired as a Firefighter, you will receive a salary and attend an 18-week firefighter program at the City of Milwaukee Safety Academy. During this time, you will attend classroom and physical training classes for eight hours a day, every day, except weekends and holidays. Some training components and expectations for fire recruit performance are presented in the following paragraphs.

In academics, you will be trained in:

- *Firefighting Tactics*
- *Emergency Medical Techniques*
- *Department policies, procedures, rules and regulations*

There will be a regular program of testing to gauge your competency in relevant training subjects.

In the area of physical training, you will undergo strenuous and demanding training exercises. While wearing heavy firefighter turnout gear, you will climb ladders, chop with axes, lift heavy ladders, crawl on your stomach and back while struggling with heavy, charged hose lines. You will be exposed to smoke and fire and to situations as close to the real thing as can be safely created.

As a new recruit, you should expect to undergo the most strenuous, demanding and tiring work that you have ever experienced.

Salary, Fringe Benefits, and Working Conditions. The MFD total compensation package will be competitive with the salaries and benefits received by firefighters in major cities throughout the nation. A firefighter's exact salary will be determined by departmental rank and length of service. See the examination announcement bulletin for current firefighter salary information.

In addition to their salary, firefighters receive the following fringe benefits:

- *Vacation.* Firefighters receive a vacation of 4 24-hour shifts off after 1 year of service, 6 after 7 years, 9 after 15 years, and 11 after 23 years of service.
- *Holidays.* Firefighters receive 1 24-hour shift off with pay in lieu of regular holidays, per calendar year.
- *Sick Leave.* Firefighters begin earning sick leave immediately after hire, but must be employed for at least six months before it may be used.
- *Pension.* Firefighters are covered by a city funded pension plan. Firefighters do not participate in the social security system, except for Medicare.
- *Insurance.* Firefighters receive a group life insurance policy; the benefit amount is based upon annual salary. They are also protected by a comprehensive health and dental insurance program. The cost of insurance may be fully paid by the city, or shared between the firefighter and the city, dependent upon the program chosen.
- *Education.* Firefighters who choose to continue their education may be eligible for tuition reimbursement and may also receive annual incentive pay for completion of approved course work.

Firefighters work 24-hour shifts, from 8:00 a.m. one day until 8:00 a.m. the next day, and then have two 24-hour shifts off. A firefighter also has an additional 24-hour shift off every 27 days. The shift rotation continues without regard to weekends or holidays, although firefighters often arrange to trade off days with other firefighters so that they may be off on days of particular importance to them.

The department is a quasi-military organization. Consequently, firefighters must follow all department rules and regulations. All Firefighters must reside in the City of Milwaukee. If a firefighter lives outside the city at the time of hire, the firefighter will be given 6 months to move within the city limits. Recruits are on probation for a 16 months after hire. Their job performance is periodically evaluated according to established standards. Recruits must pass the written and practical examinations for state licensure at the EMT-Basic IV level. They are given two years from the time they take the examination during recruit training to qualify at the EMT-Basic level and an additional two years to qualify at the EMT-Basic IV level. Within the 2-year or 4-year period, probation is extended until all portions are passed.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

The selection process begins when you file your application. Applications may be filed by anyone who meets the qualifications. Applications are not accepted from individuals who do not meet the qualifications. If it is discovered at a later date that you did not meet the qualifications when you applied, your application will be voided.

The commission reserves the right to reduce the applicant pool by random selection depending on the number of applications received.

Examination Phases. The examination consists of several components. The first part of the selection process is the Written Test. The Written Test will consist of approximately 50 multiple-choice questions designed to test three abilities important to the performance of the firefighter's job, such as the ability to follow oral instructions, to learn quickly, and to read and understand technical material. Those who pass this test will be scheduled to continue on in the examination process. The next components in the selection process are the Physical Ability Test and the Oral Exercise. These may be given in either order. The Physical Ability Test will consist of a series of events simulating firefighter activities. The Oral Exercise will require you to respond directly to job related situations portrayed on a television monitor.

Placement on Eligible Lists and Final Score. Candidates must pass the written test, physical ability test and oral examination in order to be placed upon an eligible list. The Oral Exercise plus preference points determine a candidate's final score. Military preference points are added to the final passing score in accordance with Wisconsin State Statutes and Commission Rules. Education preference points are awarded to candidates who have Associate or Bachelor's Degrees in Fire Science or Fire Technology. Preference points are also added to the final passing scores of candidates who are City of Milwaukee residents at the time of application. Proof of military service (Form DD214-Member 4), education, and residency must be provided at a date during the testing process as instructed. Successful candidates will be provided with more information regarding preference points at a later date.

After each examination component has been administered, all candidates will be notified by mail as to whether or not they have qualified to continue on in the selection process. After passing all the tests, or failing any test, candidates will receive information concerning all scores they have earned. Commission staff members are not permitted to reveal individual test scores until an eligible list is established or an individual fails or does not appear for an examination component. Only those candidates who complete all three examinations will receive a final score for this examination.

The Background Investigation. All candidates for appointment as Firefighters for the City of Milwaukee must undergo a background investigation. The City, through its agency, the Fire and Police Commission, is responsible to the citizens of Milwaukee for assuring that all persons placed in a position of responsibility for public safety can be relied upon to fulfill that trust.

NOTE: Possession of a regular or probationary valid driver's license is a minimum requirement for the position. Current lack, revocation or suspension of a regular driver's license at the time the motor vehicle record is checked during the background investigation will result in retroactive rejection of the candidate's application. A full background investigation would not be conducted in this event.

A Firefighter, when scheduled to work, must be prepared to respond to emergency calls and to perform competently. A background that shows evidence of irresponsibility is therefore undesirable. Such background factors as poor attendance or tardiness with past employers, resignation without notice, failure to pay debts and fines, and dependence upon drugs or alcohol show evidence of irresponsibility which would reflect poorly on the candidate.

A Firefighter must drive emergency and other department vehicles when assigned. A background that shows repeated motor vehicle moving violations or accidents reflects poorly on the candidate.

A Firefighter's willingness and ability to follow rules and orders can affect life and safety. A background that shows a pattern of ignoring rules is undesirable. Such background factors as criminal or civil convictions, motor vehicle violation convictions, rule-breaking with past employers, and discipline for rule-breaking in the military would reflect poorly on the candidate.

A Firefighter deals with citizens who are in a distraught or helpless state. A background that shows a disregard for human dignity or an inability to deal with others under stress is undesirable. Such background factors as problems with co-workers or customers in past employment, history of violent or antisocial behavior, or conviction for crimes against persons would reflect poorly on the candidate.

A Firefighter lives in a family environment with others to whom he or she is not related, and has access to the premises of citizens in emergency situations. A background that shows a lack of honesty and integrity is undesirable. Such background factors as honesty-related problems in previous employment, convictions for property crimes, and falsification of information in the background questionnaire would reflect poorly on the candidate.

Generally, the results of a Firefighter candidate's total background investigation will be taken into consideration when the investigator determines whether to recommend or to disqualify the candidate for employment.

Positive aspects of the individual's background may outweigh negative factors, depending on the nature of the negative factors and the overall pattern shown. **HOWEVER, THERE ARE SOME FACTORS ALONE WHICH MAY BE SUFFICIENT TO DISQUALIFY A CANDIDATE.** These are:

- a felony conviction.
- a court-martial conviction for a felony.
- 4 or more misdemeanor convictions, with one in the last three years
- 2 or more convictions for driving while under the influence, with one in the last three years.
- 2 or more convictions for reckless driving, with one in the last three years.
- 2 or more occurrences of driver's license revoked or suspended for moving violations or loss of all points in the last three years.
- use of illegal drugs or unexplained controlled substances in the last three years.
- positive finding of an illegal drug or an unexplained controlled substance or prescription narcotic in a urinalysis.
- dishonorable discharge from the U.S. military service.
- current addiction to drugs, narcotics or alcohol. (A recovering alcoholic or addict, not currently using, is not considered to be currently addicted for this purpose.)
- intentional untrue statements or intentional omission of material information in the application, background questionnaire or to the investigator.

Note: Individuals who are to receive priority appointment under the Supplemental Order in Civil Action 74-C-480 must pass a background investigation as is usually conducted relative to their backgrounds as of the retroactive seniority date such individual may receive. In addition, such individuals may also be disqualified based upon conduct occurring after the applicable retroactive seniority date if incumbent Firefighters are, or would be, terminated from employment based upon the same or similar conduct.

The Background Process. One to two months before a candidate on the eligible list comes up for appointment, the candidate will be asked to complete a detailed background questionnaire. The questionnaire will form the basis of the background investigation, which will be conducted by the Fire and Police Commission staff investigator. The investigator will check police, motor vehicle, credit, employment, and school records, contact personal references, and perform whatever additional investigation is necessary to verify the information provided on the questionnaire. The investigator will then recommend or disqualify the candidate.

Recommended candidates will be scheduled for the remaining portions of the selection process, usually the medical examination and drug screening. Disqualified candidates will be informed by mail of the background factors which have resulted in their disqualification.

Disqualified candidates will have an opportunity to appeal their disqualification. An appeal hearing must be requested in writing, and must include the reasons why the candidate believes the disqualification should be reconsidered. Based upon the information submitted by the candidate, the Fire and Police Commission will determine whether a hearing is warranted, and notify the candidate accordingly. A panel composed of Fire and Police Commission Board members and/or staff at a time and place determined by the Commission will hear appeals. Candidates are advised to provide any documentation that supports their appeal. If a candidate fails to appear for a scheduled hearing, the disqualification will stand. The decision of the panel is final.

Medical Examination. After a conditional offer of employment is made, the candidate will be scheduled for a medical examination. The purpose of this examination is to determine medical fitness to perform all the physical tasks required for successful firefighter service. A number of laboratory tests, including

a blood test, chest x-ray, vision test, audiometric test, pulmonary function test, and urinalysis, are mandatory components of the medical examination. A drug screen test will also be conducted. A psychological test may be required as part of the medical examination.

PREPARATION OVERVIEW

This portion of the Guide is designed to help you prepare for the test. An overview of each section is presented below.

PART I: WRITTEN TEST

The first part of this Guide deals with the Written Test. It is divided into two major sections:

- Section I:** **General Test Information:** This section provides you with information that is useful when taking any type of multiple-choice test. This section provides suggested test-taking strategies (such as underlining important words in questions), a strategy for analyzing and avoiding errors, and instructions regarding the answer sheet to be used at the actual exam.
- Section II:** **Ability Areas:** This section focuses on the ability areas that will be covered on the test. For each ability area, a definition, as well as test-taking strategies and illustrative examples, is provided. In addition, this section contains sample questions that you can answer to practice for the actual exam. Explanations of the answers to the sample questions appear at the end of this section.

PART II: PHYSICAL ABILITY TEST

The Physical Ability Test consists of a series of events simulating firefighter activities.

Part II of this Guide contains material intended to inform you about the Physical Ability Test. It is divided into two sections:

- Section I:** **Exercise Description:** This section provides a description of the Physical Ability Test in which candidates will participate as part of the testing process.
- Section II:** **Preparing for the PAT:** This section discusses the physical factors that affect your ability to perform the Physical Ability Test.

PART III: ORAL EXERCISE

The Oral Exercise consists of scenarios portraying situations that could occur in a firefighter's job. You will respond to the situations.

- Section I:** **Exercise Description:** This section describes how the oral exercise is set up and what participants will do.
- Section II:** **Preparing for the Oral Exercise:** This section describes the abilities that are tested in the oral exercise and some strategies for preparing for the test.

PART I: WRITTEN TEST

SECTION I: GENERAL TEST INFORMATION

A: OBJECTIVES

To Provide You with Some General Test-Taking Strategies

Some general suggestions for taking multiple-choice exams include circling key words in questions and answering easier questions first.

To Provide You with Information About Common Test-Taking Errors and Strategies for Avoiding Them

This Guide explains errors typically made in multiple-choice ability tests and includes steps for analyzing your own errors and strategies for avoiding the same errors in the future.

This Guide contains a great deal of information. The last thing we want to do is to overwhelm you with too many strategies to think about for each question on the actual exam. In order to avoid this, there are some things you should keep in mind:

1. The more familiar you become with the strategies suggested in this Guide, the more automatic they will become. **REPETITION** and **PRACTICE** are the keys. The more you review this Guide, the better off you will be.
2. Many of the strategies suggested for each of the ability areas apply only to questions testing those areas. For example, you'll see that the suggestions for dealing with Oral Directions questions apply only to those questions. By becoming familiar with these strategies, you will be able to quickly and easily decide which strategies to apply to each type of question.
3. Some of the general test-taking techniques that are relevant to all questions are useful only when you cannot answer a question easily. If you are 100% sure of an answer, you should simply fill in the correct answer. However, there are some strategies, such as underlining or circling key words and phrases, that do not take much time and are useful for almost all questions.

To Familiarize You with the Procedures and Materials You Will Encounter During the Actual Examination

This Guide includes information about the procedures to be followed during the actual exam. The sample questions provided in the Ability Areas section will give you a good idea of the kinds of questions to expect. Answering the sample questions will allow you to assess your own ability and identify those ability areas where you should focus your preparation efforts. In addition, answering these sample questions should serve to reduce anxiety or fear of the test situation, since much of the fear associated with test-taking situations is related to the novelty of the situation. In other words, applicants simply are not used to taking tests and are not quite sure of what they'll be facing. Giving you this first-hand experience with the test-taking situation should help minimize these fears.

To Familiarize You with the Ability Areas Covered on the Test

There are five abilities covered on the Written Test. Some ability areas are combined so that the Test includes only three separate test areas. This Guide will provide you with definitions of these abilities and the three sub-tests, and examples of how they apply to the job of an entry level firefighter.

To Provide You with Test-Taking Strategies for Each of the Abilities

This Guide contains strategies to help you answer questions that test each of the abilities.

B: GENERAL TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES

To do your best on the exam, you should remember some general test-taking strategies:

Make sure you understand the test format and requirements.

1. Make sure you read all of the directions carefully.
2. Make sure you understand how to mark the answer sheet correctly. (Specific instructions will be provided at the test site.)
3. Make certain you know how much time you have to complete the examination. (You will have approximately one hour and 15 minutes to complete the 50-question examination. The exact schedule will be provided at the test site and periodic time indications will be given during the examination.)
4. Test monitors will be at the test site to help every candidate. If you have any questions, ask for the monitors' assistance before the examination begins.

Make sure you understand the question.

5. Read each question carefully. Try to answer the question before you look at the choices. If you know the answer, compare it to the available choices and pick the closest alternative.
6. You may write in your test booklets, so mark the test questions to make them read more easily. Specifically:
 - a. Use slash marks to break down sentences into small segments. This will make you more attentive to separate ideas in a long sentence.
 - b. Circle key words that tell what a sentence or passage is about. This makes it easier when you have to hunt for the answers later.
 - c. Find and underline clue words such as some, all, every, sometimes, and, and or.
 - 1) Words such as all, never, none and every harden a sentence by indicating there are no exceptions. As a rule, alternatives with these words have less chance of being correct.
 - 2) Words such as sometimes, may, generally and possibly soften a statement and leave more room for the alternative to be correct.
 - 3) AND means that one element of the alternative must be present or true, in addition to another. OR means there is a choice of situations, only one of the elements of the alternative must be true for it to be a correct alternative.

Proceed through the questions strategically.

7. Answer easy questions first. When you go through each question on the exam, answer the easy questions first and leave the difficult ones until you've answered all of the questions that you are sure of. This will prevent you from spending too much time on any one question and ensure that you have the time to respond to, and receive credit for, every question that you can answer

correctly. Whenever you do skip a question, use some type of code to identify it as skipped in your test booklet and don't forget to come back to it.

8. Don't get stuck on words or sentences you do not understand.

You may get the main idea of the sentence or paragraph without understanding the individual word or the individual sentence.

9. Use the process of elimination.

If you don't know the answer to a question, first eliminate those choices which are clearly wrong. Then, put a mark next to each remaining choice to indicate what you think about it (e.g., bad, good, or possible). This will save you time, particularly if you decide to skip the question and come back to it later, by reducing the number of answers you have to reread and re-evaluate before making your final choice.

10. Guess.

You will not lose any more credit for an incorrect response than you will for no response, so even if you must guess, respond to every question. If the exam period is about to end and you believe there will be a substantial number of questions (e.g., more than 5 or 10) that you will not be able to complete, reserve some time (e.g., 60 seconds) toward the very end of the exam period to answer these questions, even if you must guess. Although your guesses may not be correct, the alternative is to leave these questions blank and be assured of getting them wrong.

Use extra time wisely.

11. If you finish the examination before the examination period is over, go back and review your answers. Make any changes that are necessary. Also, make sure that you have placed your answers on the answer sheet correctly.

C: ERROR ANALYSIS

Strategies for Analyzing and Avoiding Errors

Each one of us has weak areas in our test-taking behavior. It is to your advantage to identify those weak areas before taking this examination. You can do this by answering the sample questions in this Guide. The sample questions are very similar to the questions that will appear on the actual examination. Answer these questions and check them against the answers and explanations.

There are several possible reasons for choosing an incorrect response. Seven of these reasons are presented below, along with suggestions for avoiding such errors. Once you've identified the reason for choosing an incorrect response, it will be easier to correct it, in turn making it easier to answer that type of question correctly in the future.

Reasons for Choosing Incorrect Responses

1. **Answer sheet errors and guessing errors.**

Since there are a limited number of questions on the exam, errors related to the improper use of the answer sheet are costly. Check yourself as you mark each answer choice on the answer sheet to

ensure you are marking the answer you have chosen. Also, make sure you are filling in the answer sheet for the correct question. As an additional check, after you complete the exam, go back over every question and answer again.

You may also miss questions because you failed to provide an answer or were forced to guess before time was called. If either of these things happened, consider why. Possible reasons and suggestions include:

- a) You may have missed a question because you skipped it and failed to come back to it later. Be sure you use some kind of code to identify skipped questions in your test booklet and remember to go back to them before the exam period is over.
- b) You may have lost track of the time and been unaware that the exam period was about to end before you could mark any remaining unanswered questions. Be sure to check your watch every so often so that you can keep track of how much time you have left. If necessary, be sure to save the last minute or so to mark any unanswered questions.
- c) You may have been forced to make guesses for questions at the end of the exam because you spent too much time working on difficult questions, rather than skipping them and saving them for later. Or, if you did skip difficult questions, you may have failed to code the various alternatives as (for example) bad, good, or possible. Thus, you did not reduce the number of alternatives you had to reconsider when you reread the questions. Be sure that you use a code not only to identify skipped questions, but also to evaluate any alternatives that you do review in order to save some time rereading and re-evaluating.

2. Misreading a question or answer by overlooking a key word or phrase.

The solution to this problem is underlining. Underlining makes those key words and phrases stand out when choosing an answer. Once you have underlined the key words and phrases in a question, check the details of the possible answers with the details you underlined, one-by-one. If every detail doesn't match, consider that answer suspect and try another, always keeping in mind you're looking for the best possible answer.

3. Not knowing the meaning of one or more key terms.

This is a vocabulary problem. When you come to an unfamiliar word, reread the sentence to determine its meaning without worrying about the meaning of the unfamiliar word. Try to understand the general message of the sentence or paragraph. The meaning of the unfamiliar word should become clearer once you understand the phrases and ideas which surround it.

4. Having difficulty telling the difference between the important and unimportant parts of a question because it is complicated or difficult to understand.

First of all, these are the questions you should skip until the end of the test. These are also the questions on which you should use the slash mark technique mentioned earlier (general test-taking strategies). Use slash marks to break the question into smaller parts; then concentrate on one part at a time. When you do go back to these difficult questions, first read the possible answers before reading the question. This tells you what to concentrate on while reading the question. Also, focus on the topic sentences which are usually the first and last sentences in a question. Read these difficult questions twice. The first time, read for the general idea. Do not get stuck on individual words or phrases you do

not understand. The second time, read for a more detailed understanding. The first reading will give you the general meaning, so that the second reading will be easier. Last, picture in your mind what the question is asking.

5. Not being familiar with comparing combinations of information.

This is a problem of rearranging information in the correct way, making it easier to understand. Underline important pieces of information in the question and then compare this information with the possible answers point-by-point. Also, concentrate on eliminating the wrong answers first.

6. Choosing an answer simply because it "looks" good.

Several factors may cause you to fall for incorrect answers that look good:

- a) An incorrect answer may contain an exact phrase from the original question.
- b) An incorrect answer may contain a phrase or sentence from the original question, but present it in a different way. For example, an idea which is rejected in the question may be presented in the answer as an idea that was supported.
- c) An incorrect answer may overstate what the question has stated. For example, if the question says, "Some incidents...", the incorrect answer may say, "All incidents..."

Some strategies used to avoid the tendency to choose incorrect answers that look good include:

- a) Have an answer in mind before you look over the alternatives. This will make you less likely to choose an answer that just "looks" good.
- b) Use the method of marking each answer to indicate what you think about it (e.g., bad, good, or possible) before choosing one.
- c) Beware of choosing answers based on common sense or previous knowledge and experience. Answer only on the basis of the material presented in the test question itself.
- d) Stick strictly to the facts or rules described in the test question itself. Don't fall for answers that stretch or exaggerate these facts or rules. This is the time to watch out for words such as "only," "never," "always," "whenever," "all," etc.
- e) Beware of answers containing exact words or phrases from the question material. Don't simply assume that such answers are correct.
- f) Prepare a defense for your answer choice. Find something in the test question which will allow you to give a strong defense for your particular answer choice.

7. You may not know why you answered a question incorrectly.

Finally, if you are unsure as to why you answered a question incorrectly and don't know why the keyed answer is correct, it would be a good idea to review this Guide again.

D. ANSWER SHEET PROCEDURES

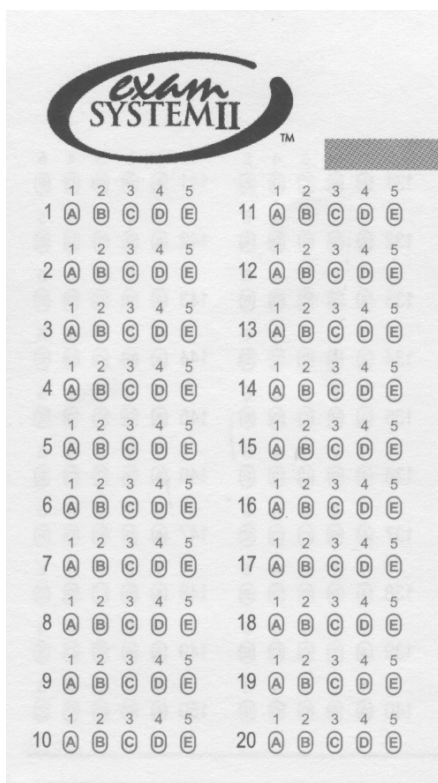
Instructions for Using the Answer Sheet

This section describes the procedure for filling in the answer sheet that will be used during the actual exam. All of the questions on the examination will be multiple-choice. You will mark your answers on a separate answer sheet that will be given to you at the exam. A sample portion of this answer sheet is contained on the bottom of this page. This sample can be used to record your answers to the questions contained in the Ability Areas section of this Guide. The specific procedure for marking the answer sheet during the actual exam is described below.

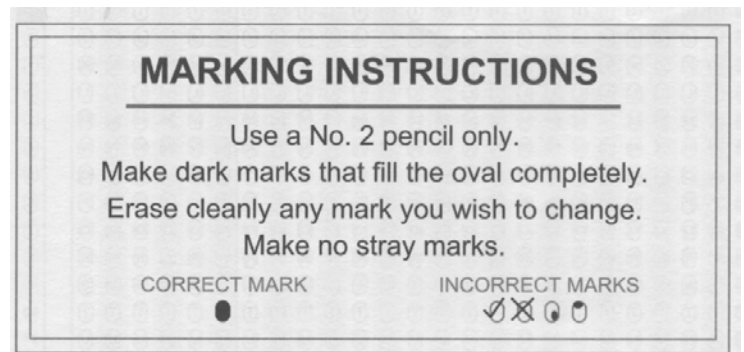
Practice this procedure by using the Sample Answer Sheet to record your answers to the Ability Areas sample questions.

There are a few points we urge you to keep in mind when marking the answer sheet:

1. Be sure that the number of the question you are working on in the test booklet matches the number of the question you are marking on the answer sheet. That is, if you are on question 12 in the test booklet, be sure you are marking question 12 on the answer sheet.
2. Be sure to record all of your answers on the answer sheet. Do not place any other stray marks or notes on the answer sheet. Instead, use your test booklet for scratch work or to mark questions to return to later. Although you may write in your test booklet, **your score will be based only on the answers that appear on your answer sheet.**
3. There are only four alternatives to each question, although the answer sheet provides space for five responses. Be sure you do not mark "E" for any questions since this is not a valid answer choice.



The image shows a sample answer sheet for "Exam System II". It features a grid of 20 questions, numbered 1 through 20. Each question has five response options labeled A, B, C, D, and E. The grid is organized into two columns of 10 questions each. The "Exam System II" logo is at the top left. The answer for question 10 is marked with a black oval around the letter "B".



MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

Use a No. 2 pencil only.
Make dark marks that fill the oval completely.
Erase cleanly any mark you wish to change.
Make no stray marks.

CORRECT MARK: A solid black oval.

INCORRECT MARKS: A checkmark, a cross, a partial oval, and a dot.

Sample Test Answer Sheet

This is a sample of a portion of the answer sheet that you will use at the actual exam. Use this sample to record your answers to the 18 questions contained in the Ability Areas section of this Guide. Since you will not need to use question number 20, we have filled in that question number to show you how this answer sheet should be used. You will notice that "circle B" is blackened in to indicate that alternative "B" was selected as the correct answer. Also note that the entire circle has been blackened, but that no stray marks extend outside the circle. This is the correct way to record each answer.

SECTION II: ABILITY AREAS

This section of the Guide represents an attempt to orient you to the nature of the questions you will encounter on the exam, and to provide you with some useful strategies for responding to these types of questions. This portion of the Guide is organized around the ability areas to be tested. For each ability area, the following information is provided:

Definition: In this section, the ability area is defined and you are provided with examples of how the ability applies to the job of an entry-level firefighter.

Techniques: This section describes the various types of questions that will be used to assess your ability with respect to each of the areas. For each type of question, you will be given some strategies to assist you in responding to such questions. For some question types, an illustrative example and explanation are provided to give you a more complete understanding of the question descriptions and test-taking strategies.

Sample Test Questions: Sample test questions are provided for each ability area to be tested. Answers to the sample questions have been provided after the ability areas are presented. By answering the sample test questions you can actually assess your understanding of the information and test-taking strategies provided. Responding to the sample questions will also allow you to assess your current level of ability and to identify those ability areas upon which you should focus your preparation efforts. Use the Sample Test Answer Sheet provided on the previous page to record your answers to these sample questions.

In summary, the information in this Guide is being presented to help you become familiar with the kinds of questions you will encounter on the examination and to become comfortable with the kinds of strategies you should use when responding to these questions. This information should help to reduce some of the anxiety that typically is associated with test-taking situations.

A. ABILITY AREAS, ASSOCIATED TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES & SAMPLE TESTS

1. FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS

Definition: This is the ability to listen to, understand, remember and follow instructions and orders that you will be given routinely as part of a task or job. An example of this would be a firefighter who is given a series of tasks to perform in the firehouse. Another example would be a firefighter at the scene of a fire who is told by his or her Captain to do several jobs in a certain order. At the scene of emergencies, personnel have to act quickly and there is little or no opportunity to have instructions repeated.

Test Format: The questions on the exam that evaluate a candidate's ability to follow oral instructions are presented on audio tape. They will include questions requiring you to listen to a set of instructions that will tell you a series of actions to perform. You will then listen to four answer choices which will also be read to you. You will mark the correct answer on your answer sheet. You will not be able to take any notes while you are listening to the audio tape.

Test-taking Techniques: First, you should listen very carefully to the tape-recorded instructions as they are played. You will be given a sample question first. This should help you to figure out how hard you must concentrate in order to hear and understand the taped instructions.

Second, as you listen to the taped instruction, try to visualize the series of actions in your mind, whether in pictures or words. Also, order or arrange the actions in your mind. Information which is in some order is easier to remember.

As a third technique, you can practice this part of the test at home by listening to information, perhaps on the television, remembering it and repeating it in the order you heard it. You could use family members to tell you a list of things to do and then quiz you on which actions you are to do second, fourth, first or third. After you have practiced this several times, try to recall the oral instructions more and more quickly.

Example

The voice on the audiotape reads: For your homework tomorrow read chapter 4 of the Fire Chemistry book, read the pamphlet on Building Construction Materials and practice tying a bowline knot.

Then the voice reads the answer choices:

If you were told to study the pamphlet on Water Distribution, mark answer choice A on your answer sheet.

If you were told to read chapter 4 of the Fire Chemistry book, mark answer choice B on your answer sheet.

If you were told to read chapter 3 of the Building Construction Materials book, mark answer choice C on your answer sheet.

If you were told to practice tying a sailor's knot, mark answer choice D on your answer sheet.

The correct answer is B because you were told to read chapter 4 of the Fire Chemistry book and you were not told to do any of the actions listed in answer choices A, C or D.

Answer choice A is not correct because you were not told to study a pamphlet on Water Distribution. Answer choice C is not correct because you were not told to read Chapter 3 of the Building Construction Materials book. You were told to read the pamphlet on Building Construction Materials. Answer choice D is not correct because you were told to practice tying a bowline knot. You were not told to practice tying a sailor's knot.

Sample Test Questions: Record your answers to the three questions below on the Sample Test Answer Sheet. As you were previously told, at the actual test, the questions and answers will be read to you. You will not actually see them in writing. Therefore, you should ask a family member or friend to read you Sample Question 1 and the answer choices. Then you should record your answer to Question 1. After that, the person should read the instructions for Sample Question 2 then 3 to you along with the answer choices and you should record your answers on the answer sheet.

Question 1: The narrator reads: Before you go into the house to treat the patient, help Jane take the stretcher from the back of the rig; grab the med kit and carry it in the house; and take the patient's medical history when you're inside.

If the first thing you are to do is to grab the med kit, mark answer A on your answer sheet.

If the first thing you are to do is to help take the stretcher from the back of the rig, mark answer B on your answer sheet.

If the first thing you are to do is to take the patient's medical history, mark answer C on your answer sheet.

If the first thing you are to do is to go into the house to treat the patient, mark answer D on your answer sheet.

Question 2: The narrator reads: Your self-contained breathing apparatus should be fully inspected and maintained, and the checklist completed weekly. Use the pressure gauge to check your air tank daily when you come on duty. Replace the tank if the pressure is less than 1750 psi.

Mark A if you were not told how often to complete the checklist.

Mark B if you were told to complete the checklist daily.

Mark C if you were told to complete the checklist weekly.

Mark D if you were told to complete the checklist monthly.

Question 3: (same instruction as above)

Mark A if you were told to refill your air tank if the pressure is less than 1700 psi.

Mark B if you were told to replace your air tank if the pressure is less than 1750 psi.

Mark C if you were told to refill your air tank if the pressure is less than 1800 psi.

Mark D if you were told to replace your air tank if the pressure is less than 1850 psi.

2. ABILITY TO LEARN

Definition: This is the ability to acquire knowledge or skill through instruction, training and study. It involves gaining knowledge or acquiring skill by listening to instructors, reading and remembering study materials, and observing others performing actions. This ability might be used by a firefighter recruit in the formal, classroom setting where the recruit listens to an instructor giving lectures on many topics, taking notes on what is said, reading textbooks or manuals that go with the lecture topic, taking notes on that material, reviewing the notes, and being evaluated on knowledge through quizzes or other tests. Learning ability might also be used later in the career of a firefighter when he or she must be taught new methods of firefighting through demonstration and hands on practice, using equipment and apparatus.

Test Format: The questions on the test that evaluate a candidate's ability to learn are also presented on audio tape. This part of the test requires you to listen to a short taped lecture on a job related topic and take notes on paper provided. Then you will be presented with several multiple-choice questions which you may use your notes to answer. There are three lectures altogether. You will listen and take notes on three lectures, then answer the questions on all three lectures.

Test-taking Techniques: First, since all the information you need to answer the test questions is contained in the lectures, you should take very extensive notes when you are listening to the lectures. You will not be able to answer the questions without your notes. The more notes you take, the more likely it will be that you will find the answers to the questions.

Second, in taking notes on the lectures, you will need to write quickly because the lecturer uses a regular conversational pace of talking. You should use a type of shorthand which you will be able to interpret later; for example, using a shortened form of a word that you will later recognize.

Third, use the General Test-Taking Strategies presented earlier in this Guide to answer the multiple choice questions.

As a fourth technique, you can practice this part of the test at home by having a friend or relative read you passages of technical material from a book. You should take notes while they read. Although in the actual test you will answer written questions, to save time the friend could quiz you on the material they read aloud and you could use your notes to answer the questions.

Example: Because the lectures are so extensive, no example will be provided as was done for the first ability area listed above. However, to reiterate, you will listen to a lecture on a job-related topic which is played on a tape-recorder. You will take notes, while you listen. You will then listen to two more lectures and take notes on them. After the lectures, you will answer test questions in a test booklet, using your notes, for all three lectures. A sample lecture followed by multiple choice questions follows.

Sample Test Questions: To do the Sample Test in this section you should use a friend or relative to read you the following written material as though they were your teacher. You should take notes while they read the material out loud and then answer Sample Questions 4 through 8 on the answer sheet.

The narrator will read out loud: The Milwaukee Fire Department consists of several bureaus. The discussion today will center on the Bureau of Special Teams, specifically on one team within that bureau, the Heavy Urban Rescue Team or HURT Team for short. The special teams of the Milwaukee Fire Department deal in highly technical areas. The HURT Team was a combination of two teams within this bureau. One was the Technical Rescue Team, whose members were trained with ropes and rope-related equipment to handle situations where standard firefighting equipment and procedures were not effective, such as high-rise fires, construction accidents, swift water rescue and some deep tunnel incidents. The other team combined with the Technical Rescue Team was the Tunnel Rescue Unit formed to provide emergency services necessitated by the construction of many miles of deep tunnels by the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District. As this construction program nears completion, more than 40 miles of tunnels, some as far as 320 feet beneath the city and as large as 32 feet in diameter will be constructed. Tunnel fires, explosions and other underground catastrophes are incidents that may occur that would require specialized rescue tunnel services.

So the HURT Team is a combination of the Technical Rescue Unit and the Tunnel Rescue Unit. The primary function of the HURT Team is to gain access to victims, to provide emergency medical services to the victims and to evacuate them in a safe and expeditious manner. Another area that the HURT Team will specialize in is in collapsed structures such as bombings, high angle rescue, confined space rescue, trench rescue, and tunnel rescue. The team is designed to be an emergency response team. When a dispatcher receives a call that might require the team's service, they will be sent with a first alarm assignment to that scene. At least three team members will be assigned to an apparatus that would respond to the incident with equipment. Upon arrival, the first team members will assess the situation and decide a plan of action. One person will be in charge of the operation. It is important to note here that the HURT Team is made up of members ranging in rank from Firefighter through Battalion Chief. The Team coordinates all the activity on the scene through the Battalion Chief who is on the scene. Team members are notified by the dispatcher by telephone at all the firehouses to respond to the incident.

Question 4: The Special Teams of the Milwaukee Fire Department:

- A. Deal in highly technical areas.
- B. Take the place of regular companies at fires.
- C. Are a part of the Bureau of Technical Services.
- D. Observe and monitor rescue efforts.

Question 5. The initials H.U.R.T. stand for:

- A. Human Rescue Team.
- B. High and Underground Rope Team.
- C. Hazardous Urban Relief Team.
- D. Heavy Urban Rescue Team.

Question 6. The HURT Team is:

- A. A long standing Fire Department team.
- B. A new team created to meet new needs.
- C. A combination of two previously existing Fire Department teams.
- D. A team recently taken over by the Fire Department.

Question 7. The tunnel project of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District:

- A. Involves over 40 miles of tunnels.
- B. Involves tunnels running about 20 feet below the surface of the City.
- C. Has large tunnels up to 22 feet in diameter.
- D. Is in the early stages of construction.

Question 8. The former Technical Rescue Team specialized in rescues:

- A. Involving exposure to hazardous materials.
- B. From bodies of water.
- C. From tunnel collapses.
- D. Using ropes and rope equipment.

3. READING COMPREHENSION

Definition: This is the ability to understand written language. This ability involves both the understanding of individual words as well as patterns of words (sentences and phrases). It is more than simply vocabulary, it is the ability to read a sentence or series of sentences and understand the meaning. This ability would be used in reading narrative material, such as the Milwaukee Fire Department Training Manual.

Test Format: To test reading comprehension, you will be provided with a passage that a firefighter would read as a recruit in training or on the job. These passages will be approximately 1/3 of a page in length and will be followed by two or more test questions. These questions will test your understanding of the information presented.

Test-taking Techniques: For some candidates, these questions may prove to be difficult, simply because of the initial amount of information you'll be given. Some of the techniques you can use on these questions have already been discussed as part of the general test-taking strategies.

- A. One of the most useful techniques involves reading the test questions and possible answers before reading the passage to help you identify and focus on the information that is being sought. You may find that you locate the answer to one of the questions related to a passage before you even finish reading the passage for the first time. If so, answer the question right away. As you go from one sentence or paragraph to the next, you may have to glance back at the questions to remind yourself of the specific details for which you are searching.
- B. Another extremely useful technique is to circle key words, once you have read the questions related to a passage and know what to focus on. For example, if the questions related to the passage seek information about a particular person (e.g., Mr. Jones), then circle Mr. Jones' name when you come to it in the passage, so that you don't waste time looking back through the passage later. Also, use your pencil to make the passage easier to understand by placing slash marks between key phrases.
- C. These tend to be time-consuming questions which you may not have the opportunity to read more than once. A third technique is to read for understanding the first time and avoid getting bogged down by individual words that you do not understand. Sometimes you can tell the meaning of a word from the context within which it has been placed, or you may not need to understand the word at all to understand the passage. We caution you, however, not to try to read faster than you can read with comprehension.

- D. Try to form a picture in your mind as you read. School books teach reading with books that contain pictures, because pictures aid in comprehension.
- E. Ask yourself questions as you read. When you finish reading a paragraph or a long sentence, ask yourself what the passage was saying. What was the point of the paragraph or sentence?

It's important to note that most of the suggested strategies for verbal comprehension questions are directed toward helping you understand the relatively lengthy passages of information which tend to precede these questions. Thus, these strategies would be useful with any type of question that requires you to read and understand a considerable amount of information.

Example: Because reading comprehension passages are so extensive and because candidates have normally been exposed to such a testing format, no example will be provided. However, to reiterate, you will be presented with one half page of written material related to the job of a firefighter, followed by two or more questions about the written material. A sample reading comprehension passage and multiple choice questions follow.

Sample Test Questions: Read the following passage and then answer the questions following it. Record your answers to the questions on the Sample Test Answer Sheet.

Use the information in the following passage to answer the next 2 questions.

Shoring is a process of erecting a series of timbers or jacks to strengthen a wall or to prevent further collapse of a building or earth opening. It is not to be used to restore walls or floors to their original position. Any attempt to force beams, sections of floors, or walls back into place may cause further collapse and damage. Temporary shoring is usually all that is performed by rescue squads. Because bracing, shoring, or supporting walls and floors are basically engineering problems, fire officers should call upon the sources available for assistance when planning and conducting these operations. Shoring is difficult work and requires training and practice to be effective.

Question 9. _____ is NOT an objective of shoring.

- A. Strengthening.
- B. Preventing collapse.
- C. Restoring.
- D. Supporting.

Question 10. Which of the following situations would most likely require shoring?

- A. Designing a building with an engineer.
- B. Replacing broken beams in a warehouse fire.
- C. Repositioning worn floor boards.
- D. Preventing collapse of a tunnel.

B. SAMPLE TEST QUESTIONS: ANSWERS/EXPLANATIONS

The answers to the Ability Areas Sample Test Questions are listed below. Explanations of the answers follow this list.

- | | | | |
|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. B | 4. A | 7. A | 10. D |
| 2. C | 5. D | 8. D | |
| 3. B | 6. C | 9. C | |

Oral Directions questions - 1, 2, and 3: These questions are based on the two separate oral instructions read to you. The answers can be explained by looking back at the specific oral instruction given.

Ability to Learn questions - 4 through 8:

4. The correct answer is A. In the lecture, the narrator said that the Special Teams of the Milwaukee Fire Department deal in highly technical areas.

B- is incorrect, because the Special Teams of the Milwaukee Fire Department do not deal with routine incidents, such as fires. Therefore, the Special Teams would not replace regular firefighting companies at a fire. Although this was not directly stated in the lecture, you should have determined that this answer was incorrect from a number of clues, such as the title "Special Teams" and the fact that the kinds of activities carried out by the two teams described in the lecture were of a special or unusual nature.

C- is incorrect, because in the lecture the narrator stated that the discussion today would be about the **Bureau of Special Teams**.

D- is incorrect, because the Special Teams actually carry out rescue efforts, not just observe and monitor them. The lecture did not state that Special Teams do not just observe and monitor rescue efforts, but it is implied that they do more than that.

5. The correct answer is D. The lecturer stated that HURT was short for Heavy Urban Rescue Team.

A- is incorrect, because the actual name of the unit was specifically mentioned.

B- is incorrect, because the actual name of the unit was specifically mentioned.

C- is incorrect, because the actual name of the unit was specifically mentioned.

6. The correct answer is C. In the lecture, the narrator stated that the HURT Team was a combination of two teams that were in the Bureau of Special Teams.

A- is incorrect, because the lecture implies that the HURT Team is new, although it does not say so specifically. Listening to the lecture, you receive the impression that the two older teams that combined to make up the HURT Team were possibly longstanding.

B- is incorrect, because the lecture stated that two different Teams formerly carried out the functions that the HURT Team now specializes in. The needs the HURT Team addresses already existed.

D- is incorrect, because the lecture stated that the HURT Team, as well as the two teams that combined to make up the HURT Team, is part of the Milwaukee Fire Department. The lecture did not mention any other department as controlling these Teams.

The correct answer is A. The lecture included the information that more than 40 miles of tunnels will be constructed at the end of the tunnel project.

B- is incorrect, because the lecture stated that some tunnels were as much as 320 feet below the city.

C- is incorrect, because the lecture stated that some tunnels will be as large as 32 feet in diameter, not 22 feet.

D- is incorrect, because the lecture stated that the tunnel construction project nears completion, meaning it is in late, not early, stages of construction.

7. The correct answer is D. The lecture stated that the former Technical Rescue Team consisted of members who were trained with ropes and rope-related equipment.

A- is not correct, because, in the lecture, no mention was made at all of the team dealing with rescues involving hazardous materials.

B- is not correct, because, in the lecture, no mention was made at all of the team dealing with rescues from bodies of water.

C- is not correct, because, as the lecture stated, the former Tunnel Rescue Unit specialized in tunnel emergencies, not the Technical Rescue Team.

Reading Comprehension questions - 9 and 10.

9. The correct answer is C. The reading passage mentions all the choices listed in A, B and D as uses of shoring. However, restoring is mentioned as something shoring is NOT used for. Note that this question is phrased in the negative; i.e., you are asked to choose an answer that does not fit. You should be careful to note words such as NOT in answering the questions.

A- is incorrect, because it is one of the objectives of shoring, as mentioned in the first sentence in the passage: "to strengthen a wall."

B- is incorrect, because it is one of the objectives of shoring, as mentioned in the first sentence in the passage: "to prevent further collapse."

D- is incorrect, because it is actually the same as shoring. In sentence five, it is used interchangeably with the words bracing and shoring.

10. The correct answer is D. Sentence one of the reading passage states that "shoring is a process.....to prevent further collapse of.....earth opening." A tunnel is an earth opening.

A- is incorrect, because shoring is not used in designing a building. It is used when some sort of structural damage occurs. Shoring has nothing to do with design.

B- is incorrect, because the reading passage states, in sentences 2 and 3, that shoring is not to be used to restore walls or floors to their original position and that any attempt to force beams back into place may cause further damage. Although it does not specifically state that shoring is not used to replace broken beams, it is implied that shoring is not used to replace anything in a building. It is only meant to strengthen.

C- is incorrect, because the passage states that shoring is used to support floors. To reposition worn floor boards may not be an emergency situation at all.

PART II: THE PHYSICAL ABILITY TEST

In the physical ability test, you will be evaluated on your strength and endurance. An exceptionally high level of strength and endurance are necessary in firefighting. At a fire scene a firefighter must be able to perform a series of physically demanding operations quickly for an extended period without weakening. Lives may depend on the ability to do so.

The Physical Ability Test (PAT) consists of a course on which you will be required to progress through a series of strenuous exercises as quickly as possible. You will wear a fire coat and helmet, and carry an air tank harnessed to your back. The total weight of this gear is approximately 45 pounds. In order to qualify, you must successfully complete each exercise, and you must complete the course within a time limit of **7 1/2 minutes**. You may not stop to rest on the course. You must either be traveling between exercises or working to perform an exercise. You will not be disqualified if you fall, providing you get up and continue immediately.

You will be disqualified and directed to leave the course if:

- 1 - You stop and are unable to continue.
- 2 - You are unable to perform an exercise.
- 3 - You exceed the **7 1/2 minute** overall time limit.
- 4 - You ask to be voluntarily disqualified.

In performing the test, you should:

Wear clothing appropriate for physically demanding work. Wear long pants, such as a warm up suit or sweat pants. It is not necessary to wear long sleeves, since you will be wearing a fire coat over your clothing.

Wear athletic shoes that are comfortable and provide support.

You may wear gloves but they will not be provided.

You may not use any extraneous piece of personal equipment that you bring with you to help you perform any event. You may only use the equipment provided. However, you are permitted personal safety devices such as basic knee and ankle supports.

Because the Physical Ability Test is physically demanding, it is suggested that candidates refrain from eating at least two hours before the examination. However, you are urged to drink plenty of fluids beginning the day before the test and continuing up until the time you are tested. Avoid drinking caffeinated beverages. You are also advised to stretch and warm up before participating in the test.

EXERCISE DESCRIPTION

Please note that the specific weights, distances, etc. may vary slightly from what is described below.

LADDER CLIMB - You will climb a 40-foot ladder set at a 70-degree angle to the third level of the training tower and descend the tower using the outside stairs. You will not be timed while climbing the ladder. The timing will begin when you have successfully descended and stepped off the stairs.

HOSE DRAG - You will place the nozzle of a dry 2 1/2 inch hose line over your shoulder and drag the hose for 200 feet. The weight being dragged increases as you progress. You will be dragging approximately 165 pounds at completion.

CHOPPING SIMULATION - You will strike a target with an 8-pound mallet 50 times. Acceptable hits will be registered. Unacceptable hits will not be counted toward the 50-stroke requirement.

PIKE POLE SIMULATION - You will use a 10-foot pike pole (a pole with both a point and a hook at the end) to alternately strike up and pull down on a board suspended overhead. Twenty acceptable push/pull sets must be completed. The pike pole weighs approximately 7 pounds.

LADDER LIFT - You will use designated rungs to pick up a 24-foot extension ladder hanging horizontally on a rack 29 inches from the ground, and lift it to rest on a shelf 57 inches from the ground. The ladder must balance on its bottom beam sufficiently for you to let go. Then you will replace the ladder on the lower rack. The 24-foot ladder weighs approximately 75 pounds.

MANNIKIN CRAWL - You will pull a 125-pound mannikin from a table and drag it, by a belt fastened around its upper torso, through a simulated tunnel, 2 feet, 6 inches wide x 2 feet, 7 inches high x 20 feet long. Then you will pick up the mannikin and place it back on the table.

All of the above are activities which a Firefighter is called upon to perform at a fire scene at a similar level of endeavor. They are activities which a new recruit should be able to perform when entering training.

PREPARING FOR THE PAT

It is essential for anyone who intends to participate in the PAT to be in general good health. By this stage of the testing process, you should be at a high level of physical fitness in terms of muscular strength and endurance, and cardiovascular fitness.

Muscular strength is defined as the ability to apply force and muscular endurance is the ability to maintain or repeatedly apply force. Since nearly all movements are performed against some degree of resistance, a certain degree of muscular strength is needed to perform any activity. Firefighters perform activities against much greater resistance and for a longer period of time than the average worker. Therefore, you must have above average muscular strength, endurance and power in order to effectively and safely handle firefighting equipment and perform the duties of a Firefighter. Firefighters with adequate muscular strength and endurance would be expected to be able to work without injury and for longer periods of time than those with inadequate strength and endurance.

Cardiovascular fitness is how well the heart can deliver oxygen to the muscles and other tissues. It is the ability to maintain whole body activity for a length of time without fatiguing or running out of breath. A highly fit person will be able to deliver large amounts of oxygen to the muscles and, therefore, be capable of prolonged muscular exercise, such as fighting fires. On the other hand, the out-of-shape individual will not be capable of delivering adequate amounts of oxygen to the muscles and will therefore fatigue quickly and be forced to stop working much sooner.

The PAT course is more demanding than it may appear from the description. It is recommended that you intensify your training in preparation for the test, concentrating on weight training for muscular strength and endurance. The endurance aspect is the ability to maintain a high level of activity demanding muscular strength for an extended period without becoming fatigued. Muscular endurance is essential to successful performance on the PAT. Activities designed to develop aerobic power, such as running, are of value to maintain cardiorespiratory fitness, but running for speed is not an ability measured in the PAT.

You may also find it useful to simulate the kinds of activities which are part of the PAT course to identify and work on your areas of weakness. All candidates can expect to do better on this portion of the examination if they have undergone a systematic program of physical preparation designed to develop the abilities described above.

PART III: THE ORAL EXERCISE

EXERCISE DESCRIPTION

In the oral exercise, you will view situations that could be a part of a firefighter's job. The situations will be acted out by professional actors and shown to you on a television screen and your responses to the scenes will be videotaped. A monitor will seat you in front of the screen and give you a chance to get settled so that you can see and hear. The monitor will also see that you are situated correctly for the camera that will film you.

You will view 8 scenes. After each scene, you will see the word "Respond" on the screen. You will then have 45 seconds to give your response. You will talk to the monitor as if you were talking to the real people in the situation that has been depicted. You will not respond by describing what you "would do" if you were in the situation. Rather, you will respond as if you were actually there. Before the test begins, you will have the opportunity to warm up with some routine questions and a practice scene that will not be scored. The monitor will leave after starting the scenarios. No one will be in the room with you as you take the test.

The actors on the screen may look expectantly at you, or change expression as you are responding to them, but they will not be able to interact with you. Your response might not require the entire 45 seconds. When you have said everything you think you should say, you may just wait quietly for the next scene.

Your videotaped responses will be evaluated later by a panel of trained and certified raters.

PREPARING FOR THE ORAL EXERCISE

How you will be evaluated:

You will not be evaluated on knowledge of the Milwaukee Fire Department, firefighting, laws or regulations applying to firefighting or emergency medicine. Rather you will be assessed on attributes such as ability to work with others as a team, observe details, analyze problems, apply principles to practical situations, take action, handle sensitive public contacts, respect individual differences, and treat all persons with respect. Your ability to speak clearly and your self-confidence, energy and organization will also be considered.

The raters will look at how you handle the situations. That is, how well you assess the problem, whether you are able to develop a practical plan, and whether your approach would be workable in real life. They will also look at how you handle the individuals involved in the situation. That is, whether what you say, how you talk to the people involved, and the attitudes and emotions you convey would show your ability to work with people in difficult situations.

Avoid causing yourself unnecessary stress

- Plan the practical aspects of getting to the oral exercise. Know where you are going and how to get there.
- Be sure you have arranged for reliable transportation ahead of time.
- Allow yourself plenty of time to get to the test. No one minds if you are early, and you can avoid the stress that comes with such problems as traffic tie-ups and trouble finding parking spaces. These avoidable kinds of stress can interfere with your ability to think clearly or make you appear more nervous and distracted than you need to be.

- Try not to come directly from work.
- Read the “Exercise Description” above again, and try to picture yourself in the situation described. Make it familiar to you so that you will not feel as if you are walking into the unknown.

Consider your appearance:

- Even though you will be alone when you take the test, live raters will evaluate you on film. You should dress as if you were going to appear before a panel. A suit, sport coat or shirt and tie would be the best choices for men. A tailored suit, skirt and blouse or dress would be the best choices for women. Although you will not be evaluated on your clothes, being neatly dressed makes you appear, and even feel, more confident.

Develop a way to practice that works for you:

- You now know a lot about what the oral exercise will be like. What part of it will be most difficult for you? Will it be talking directly to the television screen? Will it be thinking of a response quickly? Are you afraid that you won’t be able to come up with the right words to say what you want to say? Practice until you feel comfortable with these things.
- How you practice will depend on what resources you have.
- Do you have video equipment, or a friend with video equipment? You might want to tape some situations from the TV. Any situation where a character responds to a problem situation or a personal conflict would be good. Tape only short bits, where the TV character discovers the emergency or conflict. Stop recording before the character responds. Maybe you could have someone do this part for you.
- Do you know someone who works with emergency situations? You could ask that person to make up scenarios for you. You could also make them up yourself. It might work well to read these scenarios into a tape recorder.
- Once you have some sample scenarios, have someone show, read or play the scenarios for you and respond as if you were responding to characters in the scenario—just as in the test.
- The part that should help you the most is to video or audio tape yourself as you respond. Watch or listen to your responses and decide what you should do differently. Consider the affect you would have on others. Change your content, your wording, your expression until you think you are effectively handling the situation.
- It is a good idea to work with someone else who will evaluate you.
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